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Police Report Ordered on Political Files

2/16/75 By Douglas B. Feaver
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Chief Maurice Cullinane has ordered his subordinates to prepare a comprehensive report on the DC. police department's intelligence division, which officials say has kept files on local political activities.

Cullinane and Mayor Walter Washington held several discussions Friday about reports in The Washington Post that undercover police agents routinely spied on local black leaders and antiwar activists in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In a letter he delivered to

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visory council on police matters, said yesterday that police spying was "certainly a matter we would want to take up . . . I think it's imporatnt that we have a right to look at all kinds of problems . . ."

Mr. Walker said Cullinane had placed no contraints on what the group might wish to study. The Council's first meeting is scheduled for Feb. 28.

Cullinane himself said "this wouldn't be the type of thing where I would expect citizen advisory council" action. Cullinane and Mr. Walker were not aware of each other's positions.

The City Council, according to Hobson, is not planning specific hearings on the spying allegations. However, Hobson said, "I planned to ask police at budget hearings how they were spending their money."

Cullinane was iterviewed at length by the Council last week.

In his letter to the mayor, Chief Cullinane said, "I have no personal knowledge that either the data gathered or methods utilized represent actions that would be termed illegal . . ."

Cullinane conceded in an interview, however, that he could not possibly know everything that ever happened. "It's impossible for anyone to make a flat statement that nothing was ever done," he said. "But the one thing that runs through my conversations with (with police officials) is that there's never been anything (in the files) about anyone's private life. . ."

A well-informed source has told the Post that the police files included whatever details could be found on sexual habits, possible drug use, and credit standing. Zanders has said that the files did not include such information.

Cullinane said he sought to make the report to the mayor because informatimn about police activities was coming out piecemeal, from a variety of sources. "There have been innuendos, accusations by disgruntled former employees . . . the only way I know to put that to rest is to go back and reconstruct what happened."

The word "intelligence," Cullinane said, "has almost become un-American. It carries the connotation that we're trying to do something about someone's private life."

He said, however, that it would have been "an irresponsible utilization of the taxpayers' money" to deploy thousands of police to deal with the massive antiwar demonstrations at the turn of the decade without some information about who was coming and how many there were.

Cullinane promised that the report would be "timely," but that he wasn't going to rush it. A spokesman for the mayor said the report will be made public.